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## CONTENTS

	Pages
1. अक्षपूणास्तवः	1— 4
2. प्रदत्तायनम्	5— 18
3. वसुक्तक्ष्मीकल्याणम्	19— 54
4. सुभद्राहरणप्रबन्धः	55— 70
5. श्रीचिह्नकाव्यम्	71—102
6. Rāmavarmavijayacampu- work on Svāti Tirunāl Mahārāja.)	pp. 103—112

(1)

S. Venkita Subramanya Iyer,

Rāmavarmavijayacampu-  
work on Svāti Tirunāl  
Mahārāja.)



THE RĀMAVARMAVIJAYACAMPŪ- A WORK ON  
SVĀTI TIRUNĀL MAHĀRĀJA.

By

S. Venkitasubramonia Iyer.

Svāti Tirunāl Mahārāja of Travancore (1813-1847) is renowned for the numerous reforms which he introduced laying the solid foundations for the all-round progress which the state attained in later years, and even more renowned as a poet and composer who enriched arts and letters both by his own contributions and by the liberal patronage he extended to them. Music in particular was his forte and among the composers of South Indian music he ranks as an equal to the great masters like Tyāgarāja, Dīkṣitar and Śyāma Śāstri. The scholarship, statesmanship, piety, generosity and musical skill of the Mahārāja evoked the warm eulogies of his court-poets like Ravivarman Tampi and Vidvān Rājarāja Varma Kōḷi Tampurān and of his friends and admirers like Pantaḷam Tampurān and Vidvān Eḷaya Tampurān of Koṭuṇṇallūr, and attracted other poets from far and near to his court and actuated them to compose poems and songs in his honour. The author of *Rāmavarnavijayam*, is one such poet. He does not disclose his name but says that he was a *Pañcalāṅgalāgrahāravāsin* thereby indicating that



he was a Brahmin belonging to Mahādānapuram near Kanyākumārī.

The work is unpublished, but Ullur S. Parame-swara Iyer cites a few lines from it in his *Kerala Sāhitya Caritram* Part IV, stating that the work is incomplete. In the Kerala University Oriental Manuscripts Library, however, there is a complete copy of this work. It bears the number 1126 and is a paper manuscript in 34 pages transcribed in 1941, but its original source is not now traceable. It is written in Devanāgarī characters and comprises about 330 granthas.

It is in the form of a campū and is an account of a pilgrimage of King Rūma Varma (Śaṭi Tirunāl) accompanied by his brother and nephews and with all the royal paraphernalia to Kanyākumārī, in a golden chariot visiting also the important temples on the way. Its name is given as *Rūmavarmanayaya* in the title page of the manuscript. Ullur also calls it by this name and the contents of the work also justify it. But it may be noted that the name does not occur in the body of the work; nor is there any colophon to that effect. Perhaps the flyleaf or the coverboard of the original manuscript contained the name.

The work begins as follows:—

वाचां देवीमहं वन्दे वागैश्वर्यप्रदायिनीम् ।  
स्वाङ्घ्र्यञ्जासक्तचित्तानां पुंसां सर्वामरैः स्तुताम् ॥

हेरम्बः प्रभिनत्तु विघ्नमखिलं तात त्वदौद्वाहिके  
ब्रूहेतत्परिपूर्तये त्वमकरोः कस्यामरस्यार्हणाम् ।  
पृच्छन्नित्यमुमावतिं तदनु तच्छ्रीमन्दहामाङ्कुरै-  
रर्धाङ्गी जननीं जवेन मृगयन् स्तन्यं पिपासुः पयः ॥

अमरवरगणेशं नौमि केरैकवश्यं  
ममरचतुरवीर्यं चारुशुण्डाविलासम् ।  
अमरवतिकिरीटज्योतिषा रञ्जिताङ्घ्रि  
अमरमरविगजदण्डभागं नमामि ॥

वृन्दारकैः पूजितपादपङ्कजां  
मन्दारमालाञ्चितकान्तकुन्तलाम् ।  
संतारयन्तीं भवसागराञ्जनान्  
वन्देऽनिशं तामपि कन्यकाग्निकाम् ॥

पद्मनाभः कृषामिन्धुर्भक्तगुणतत्परः  
मृदुलां नितरां वाचं सरलां सन्तनोतु मे ॥

वञ्चिभूषवाञ्छितार्थदायकस्त्वहर्निशं  
वञ्चिभूषचित्तवञ्चवञ्जरस्थितो हरिः ।  
वञ्चिभूषसत्प्रबन्धसार्थकत्वमाधकः

पञ्चलाङ्गलाग्रहारवासिनं सदावतु ॥ (p. 1)

After seven more verses of an introductory nature, the work proper commences with a description of Trivandrum beginning with the verse

अस्ति श्रीमदनन्तनामनगरी नित्योत्सवैः शोभिता  
राजद्रोपुरशृङ्गकोटिनिहिता मुक्तासरालङ्कृताः ।



रम्भातुङ्गकुचद्वयीमिव सदा जेतुं (दिवं) प्रस्थिताः  
कुम्भा भान्ति परिष्कृताम्बरतला यस्यां सुवर्णोज्ज्वलाः ॥  
(p. 3)

Then follows an account of the king and his attainments. He is mostly referred to as *Vaṇcibhūpāla* and *Kulaśekharamahārāja*. The following lines are particularly noteworthy.

प्राप्यानुग्रहमन्यदुर्लभमहो श्रीपद्मनाभप्रभो-  
धितक्लेशमृते मनोज्ञकवनं लोकोत्तरं साम्प्रतम् ।  
कुर्वन् श्रीकुलशेखराख्यनृपतिः सर्वासु भाषासु य-  
श्चास्त्रज्ञानविशारदो विजयते साहित्यविद्याचणः ॥

स तावत् पुनरित्यमनवद्यैः पद्यैरतिद्वयैश्च प्रतिपदं जनानां  
प्रमोदं जनयन् भोजराज इवाभिनवकवनरसं सदानुभवभास्ते । यस्य  
किल मनसि विचिन्तितपद्मनाभस्य वितरणविजितचिन्तामणेः कवि-  
मुखारविन्दतरणेः श्रीवश्विराजचूडामणेरपरिमितभाषाविरचितकवन-  
चातुर्यं सकलजनानामाश्चर्यकरं भवति । एकैकभाषया प्रोक्तं कालि-  
दासादिभिः, अनेनानेकविधसाहित्यमनेकभाषया ।

मुद्रितं प्रतिसाहित्यं पद्मनाभस्य मुद्रया ।  
पद्मनाभनियोगेन नूनं वश्विमहीभृता ॥ (pp. 3-4)

The worship of the Mahārāja at the Śrīpadmanābhasvāmi temple and the offerings made to the different deities there as a preliminary to his journey is then described. The journey then starts in a procession in all its pomp and splendour, the king seating himself in a magnificent

golden chariot drawn by six horses and attended by an array of officials and with all the paraphernalia of elephants, cavalry and infantry. The Muslims man the cavalry and British soldiers salute him in their characteristic fashion and many Englishmen pay him respects.

अश्वानारुह्य यस्य खनिकटसुलभप्राप्तनिष्कास्तुलुष्काः  
श्वेताः सर्वे 'सला' ते विदधति मुदिताः प्रोज्झितोष्णीषवन्तः ।  
सः श्रीमान् वश्विभूपः कुवलयकुतुकं शारदेन्दुप्रकाशैः  
कीर्तिस्तोमैर्विधत्ते वितरणजनितैः सर्वभूपाग्रगण्यः ॥ (p. 8)

तीर्त्वागाधपयोनिधिं बहुभटैस्साकं सुनावाशतै-  
र्हृणास्तुङ्गतुरङ्गयुक्तशकटारूढास्तमभ्यगताः । (p. 9)

A glorious description of the chariot is then given of which the verse

खर्णस्तम्भनिषक्तरत्नविलसद्गन्धर्वपाण्युज्ज्वल-  
न्मुक्तहारविराजितं परिलसन्मणिकयपूर्णोदरम् ।  
सद्धारान्वितपाणिपद्मविलसच्छ्रीचामरैः शोभितं  
मल्लीपुष्पविराजमानमभितः श्रीपद्मरागोज्ज्वलम् ॥ (p. 10)

may be cited as a specimen. This is followed by a praise of the king seated in it in the conventional pattern of the panegyrists. The procession halts at Neyyattinkara (घृतनदीतीर) for the king to worship at the Śrīkrṣṇa temple there and then at Kuzhithura (अवटघट्टनदीतीर) to worship at the temple of Mahādeva. The Mahārāja then-



changes on to a golden palanquin, since perhaps the road was not suitable for the chariot, ornamented with ivory work and goes to Tiruvattar (श्रीचक्रदिनीतीर) to worship Lord Ādikeśava. From there he proceeds to Padmanābhapuram which he enters in a pagoda on a gorgeously decorated elephant and where he is accorded a very grand reception. After visiting the different temples there, he resumes the journey in the chariot to Suchindram. After a brief stay at Suchindram he goes to Kanyakumari in a palanquin, performs several religious rites and returns to Suchindram. During the return journey to Trivandrum also, the Maharaja worships at the temples visited during the onward journey. Details at every place are given in the work. A grand reception awaits him at Trivandrum and he goes to worship at the Padmanābha temple.

At the close of the work we get

पद्विष्णुशेषदेशपतिभिः संश्लाघितः सन्ततं  
सङ्गीतामृतपूरितासुकमलः साहित्यविद्याचणः ।  
ध्यायन् विष्णुपदारविन्दमनिशं स्यान्नन्दपुर्या भृशं  
राजा मञ्जुलवाग्विलासचतुरः सोऽयं सदा राजते ॥ (p. 33)

Also

तस्मिन् वर्षेति हेमराशिसनिशं स्यान्नन्दपुर्या भृशं  
पङ्को न कचिदत्र मेघनिनदो विदुच यस्मान्न हि ।  
हंसो जातकुतूहलश्च परितो भूमण्डलं सञ्चरन्  
तस्मात् स्वर्णवलाहकोऽयमिति हि प्रादुस्सतां सज्जनाः ॥  
(p. 33)

After this there are seven verses in praise of a minister named Keśava which begins—

क्षीराब्धौ शयितं पुराणवचनाच्छीपद्मनाभं प्रभुं  
श्रुत्वा नन्दसुधां पिवन्नतिमुदा श्रीकेशवाख्यः प्रभुः ।  
आनन्दं जनयन्नशेषभुवने देवं तमेवानिशं  
प्रत्यक्षं कलयन्ननन्तशयने सोऽयं विजेजीयते ॥ (p. 33)

and ends

नित्यं पङ्कजनाभवादकमलं स्वे मानसे संस्मरन्  
धीमान् शत्रुपराजयं विरचयन् सामाद्युपायैरयम् ।  
शास्त्रज्ञानं सुकवीन् रसज्ञानिलकः सम्मानयन् सर्वदा  
मन्त्री मन्त्रविशारदो विजयते वञ्चीवलारेः पुरे ॥ (p. 34)

The author does not give his name, as already stated, but he gives his native place as पञ्चलाङ्गलाग्रहार which is Machalanapuram near Kanyakumari and as he is a resident of an अग्रहार he can taken to a Brahmin. His poetry is not of any high order but is nevertheless simple and generally faultless. No doubt an occasional *śūdhā-lāṅkāra* like the *Aṣṭaprāsa* as in

कालारतिशशाङ्कशेखरशिरोमालाविषद्वाहिनी-  
कूलान्तोज्ज्वलफेनकूटविलसत्कैलासभास्वद्यशाः ।  
लीलालेशपराजितारिपृतनाकोलाहलो भाग्यवान्  
शीलालङ्कृतसद्गुणः कविकुलप्रोक्षासकारी सदा ॥ (p. 10)

or an *utprekṣā* as in



स्वरथगतिविरोधं कर्तुमुद्योगवन्तः

कनकरथतुरङ्गस्तस्य वञ्चीश्वरस्य ।

स्वयमिति हृदि मत्वा मण्डलं चण्डभानोः

परिणतमधुना किं कुम्भरूपं रथाग्रे ॥ (p. 11)

beautifies the work, and there are interesting prose passages, cast in the conventional mould, as in

अथ खलु श्रीपद्मनाभचरणारविन्दमकरन्दास्वादनतुन्दिलेन्दि-  
न्दिरायमाणः कुलशेखरमहाराजोऽयं मेरुरिव कल्याणप्रकृतित्वे, मन्दर  
इव लक्ष्मीसमाकर्षणे, जलनिधिरिव मर्यादायां, धरणिरिव लोकधृति-  
करणे, पवन इव सकलपार्थिवरजोविकारापहरणे, मातङ्ग इवाज्ञाना-  
न्धकारापहरणे, आकाश इव शब्दप्रादुर्भावे, राघव इव स्वीकृतसुग्रीवः,  
सौमित्रिरिव सुमित्रानन्दकरः, भरत इव रामानन्दजनकः, शत्रुघ्न इवा-  
मित्रजनदर्पघ्नः (etc.) ... .. विशालो मनसि, जनकस्तपसि,  
अर्जुनो यशसि, गुरुर्वचसि (etc.) ... .. सर्वावयवेषु सम्भूत-  
लक्षणः सर्वोत्तरगुणगणपरिपूर्णो विजयते । (p. 5)

but there is considerable truth in the poet's own humble statement that the exhibition of his poetry before his patron, the hero of the work, is like one performing dance before Śiva or like offering a lamp to the sun.

सुधांशुविम्बस्य सुधासमर्पणं

शिवायतो नाट्यविधिप्रदर्शनम् ।

विभावसीदीपसमर्पणं यथा

तथा कवित्वं मम तस्य सन्निधौ ॥ (p. 3)

The value of the work consists in the minute details it gives about the entire journey and also in its estimate of the virtues of the Mahārāja.

In addition to the passages cited, the following lines relating to the Mahārāja may be noted:-

अष्टादशसु भाषासु कवनं च करोति यः । (p. 2)

सकलकलाकलापकुशलः, स्वकेलवरसुपभाजितकुसुमायुधः, कर-  
कमलगृहीतचन्द्रहासः ।

कविवक्त्राब्जमित्रोऽयं वञ्चिभूपशिरोमणिः । (p. 3)

श्रीपद्मनाभचरणारविन्दपरिचरणलब्धसकलसाम्राज्यलक्ष्मीधुरः  
सर्वविद्याकारः सङ्गीतरत्नाकरः कविजनवदनारविन्दानन्दजननदिन-  
करायमाणः अश्रान्तविश्राणनविजितचिन्तामणिः सर्वज्ञचूडामणिः ।

(p. 29)

So too the entourage of the Mahārāja-

तरुणानेकवर्णश्रीवायुवेगतुरङ्गमैः ।

सदोत्कटैर्गजैरुष्टैः कोमलैः कलभैस्ततः ॥

तुङ्गाश्वस्थमहाखड्गधारिभिश्च तुलुक्कैः ।

धानुष्कैश्चातिशूरैस्तैः शक्तितोमरधारिभिः ॥

मल्लैर्वलसमृद्धैश्च चित्रकुन्तधरैर्वृता ।

खेटिभिर्मदसंयुक्तैः पताकावलिधारिभिः ॥

भटजालैः परिवृता रणमण्डलपण्डितैः ।

मन्त्रतन्त्रविचारहर्मन्त्रिभिः शास्त्रकोविदैः ॥



कार्याकार्यविचारज्ञैः प्राड्विपाकैश्च वेत्रिभिः ।  
 सर्वाधिकारिपार्वत्यकारिणां च कदम्बकैः ॥  
 लेखकैः सुकुमा(रै)स्तैरालयानां विचारकैः ।  
 स्वपकारैर्महापाकशूरैस्सुदगणैर्वृता ॥

(p. 2c)

Nowhere in the work do we get the king explicitly stated as Svāti Tirunāl. But the account given of him particularly the reference to his deep learning, extreme generosity, musical scholarship and patronage of arts and letters, and above all the multi-lingual compositions and the stamp of the name 'Padmanābha' in every one of them, leaves no doubt as to his identity. External evidence also confirms this since a chariot for processions was built only by Svāti Tirunāl, in the year 1841 on the design and supervision of Veeraswami Naidu of Madras and it was Svāti Tirunāl that went on a pilgrimage to Kanyākumāri accompanied by his brother Uttram Tirunāl and nephews, the princes Āyilyam Tirunāl Uttrātam Tirunāl and Viśākham Tirunāl (as repeatedly stated in the work- *भ्रात्रा स्वसृपुत्रैः साकम्, स्वस्त्रीयैरनुजेन च*) in the year 1844. The minister Keśava whose praise occurs at the end of the work can be identified with Keśava Pillai who belonged to South Travancore and who was holding the office of Dewan Peishkar at the time of the event described in the work. It may be presumed that he was a patron of the poet and was instrumental in getting him access to the royal court.

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I, K. Raghavan Pillai, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

K. RAGHAVAN PILLAI (Sd.)

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